



**Name of Program:** Safe at Home

**Name of Organization:** Rebuilding Together, Inc., Washington, DC

**Description of Program:**

**“Safe at Home”: Helping Low-income Elderly Homeowners Age in Place**

**Fall Prevention through Home Modification Prevents Life Altering Injury:** Falls are the leading cause of injury in seniors age 65 and over. Sixty percent of injury-related deaths in this age group are the result of a fall. Thirty-three percent of these falls are attributed to hazards in the home; hazards that could often be avoided if homes were modified. Fifty percent of older people who have a hip fracture cannot return home or live independently. The average cost of care in a nursing home is \$46,000 per year. Institutionalization is not the answer—remaining safe in one’s home is. Rebuilding Together’s Safe at Home program makes the modifications and accessibility improvements — free of charge — that enable low-income elderly homeowners to avoid nursing home placement and age comfortably and safely in their own homes.

**Rebuilding Together’s Goals through the Safe at Home Program**

1. Broaden public awareness and build coalitions around the need for fall prevention
2. Provide training and technical assistance on fall prevention methods (home modifications)
3. Expand our affiliate network’s capacity to provide fall prevention services
4. Act as an information and referral resource on fall prevention
5. Champion the needs and rights of low-income elderly homeowners

Collaborating with national and local organizations, such as the American Occupational Therapy Association, Area Agencies on Aging, local senior and community service providers, and the National Association of Home Builders’ Certified Aging in Place Specialist program, Rebuilding Together affiliates work to improve accessibility and mobility for low-income, elderly homeowners. Modifications might include installing handrails and grab bars, adding toilet and shower assist units, building wheelchair ramps, widening doorways and passageways, installing lever-operated door handles and faucets, lowering sinks, counter tops and vanities, laying anti-skid stairway treads, and improving lighting.

**Our Demonstrated Return on Investment and Ability to Leverage Private Funds:** On average, we generate \$3 to \$4 of donated materials and volunteer labor for every \$1 donated. In 2006-08 we secured grants and pledges to support all Rebuilding Together activities totaling \$12 million from Lowe’s, the American Petroleum Institute, Sears, Home Depot, and other Fortune 500 companies; \$1.4 million of which supported the Safe at Home Program. In 2007, in 90 fall-prevention-oriented projects sponsored by AARP and Lowe’s, Rebuilding Together leveraged:

- 1,162 community volunteers
- \$834,000 in donated materials
- \$1,880,052 in market value, or \$20,889 per project

**Federal Partnership 2000 – 2006:** With federal funding through the Administration on Aging from 2000 to 2006, Rebuilding Together established the highly-successful Safe at Home Program. Hundreds of volunteers and social service offices have received fall prevention home modification training; an industry-recognized house assessment checklist was created; a PSA, brochures, demonstration projects, and programs at national conferences have increased the national awareness of fall prevention; 13,000 fall prevention modifications were completed in 2006, up from 5000 in 2000; *as of 2007 an estimated 20,000 falls were prevented thanks to modifications performed by the our affiliate network.*

**About Rebuilding Together:** Rebuilding Together is the nation's largest nonprofit organization working to preserve homeownership and neighborhoods by providing rehabilitation services free of charge to those in need. Through the support of corporate sponsors, local businesses, and the hands-on work of a quarter-million volunteers, Rebuilding Together rehabs and repairs 10,000 homes each year. The market value of this work is approximately \$100 million annually. In addition to our core home repair work, Rebuilding Together rehabs community centers and conducts home modification and repair programs that focus on fall prevention, energy efficiency, veterans housing, and disaster recovery and reconstruction. Rebuilding Together has grown to nearly 225 affiliates nationwide since our founding in 1988, and is now preserving safe and healthy homes in 2000 communities nationwide. Rebuilding Together celebrated the rehabilitation of our 100,000th home in 2006.

For more information about Rebuilding Together, contact Tiffanie Kinney, Program Manager at 202-483-9083 or by email at [tkinney@rebuildingtogether.org](mailto:tkinney@rebuildingtogether.org) The website is <http://www.rebuildingtogether.org/section/initiatives/safehomes>